

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (currently amended): A method of regulating access to a website by a user terminal via the internet, the user terminal reading a document including an embedded digital watermark, said method comprising: ~~the steps of:~~

at the user terminal, extracting identifying data from the digital watermark, and providing the identifying data to a central computer;

at the central computer:

identifying a pointer associated with the identifying data;

generating a validation key;

encoding the validation key through at least one of i) hashing, ii) rotating and iii)

converting the validation key to alpha-characters and then adjusting the characters

according to a code key; and

providing the pointer and the validation key to the user terminal;

at the user terminal, communicating with the website via the pointer and providing the validation key to the website; and

at the website, regulating access to the website by the user terminal based at least in part on the validation key.

2. (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the identifying data comprises a document identifier.

3. (original): The method according to claim 2, wherein the pointer comprises at least one of a URL, IP address and web address.

4. (original): The method according to claim 2, wherein the validation key comprises a date-time value.

5 – 7. canceled.

8. (currently amended): The method according to claim 1 ~~[[7,]]~~ further comprising the ~~step of encoding the code key with the validation key.~~

9. (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the validation key comprises at least one of a predetermined number and a pseudo-random number.

10. (currently amended): A method of authenticating permission to access a system comprising: ~~the steps of:~~

receiving a request to enter the system, the request including at least a validation key;
determining whether the validation key is valid, wherein the validation key comprises a time stamp and said determining determines whether the time stamp comprises a predetermined format; and

allowing access to the system based on a determination of said determining. ~~step.~~

11. (original): The method according to claim 10, wherein said system comprises a website.

12. (currently amended): The method according to claim 10, further comprising ~~the step of decoding the validation key.~~

13. (currently amended): The method according to claim 10, wherein ~~the validation key comprises a timestamp, and~~ said determining ~~step~~ further determines whether the timestamp is stale.

14. (currently amended): The method according to claim 10, wherein ~~the validation key comprises a timestamp, and~~ said determining ~~step~~ further determines whether the timestamp is within a predetermined range.

15. (currently amended): The method according to claim 10, wherein the validation key comprises a predetermined number, and said determining ~~step~~ determines whether the predetermined number matches at least one number on a list of numbers.

16. (original): The method according to claim 10, wherein the system provides information related to a digitally watermarked document.

17. (currently amended): The method according to claim 10, further comprising ~~a step of~~ determining whether the validation key comprises a valid value.

18. canceled.

19. (original): The method according to claim 10, wherein the request includes a URL and the validation key is appended to the URL.

20. (currently amended): A method of authenticating permission to access a system website via the internet, said method comprising: ~~the steps of:~~
receiving a request to enter the system, the request including at least a validation key;
~~key,~~
determining whether the validation key has been previously received; and
allowing access to the system based on a determination of said determining. ~~step.~~

21. (original): The method according to claim 20, wherein the validation key includes at least one of a date-time value, a pseudo-random number and a predetermined number.

22. (currently amended): The method according to claim 21, wherein said determining ~~step~~ comprises ~~the steps of~~ querying a database to determine if the validation key is stored therein.

23. (original): A method according to claim 21, further wherein the request comprises a URL identified from a digitally watermark-based system.

24. (currently amended): A system for exchanging data comprising:
a central server comprising at least one database including pointer information, wherein when a user terminal communicates an extracted watermark identifier to said central server, said central server identifies a corresponding pointer associated with the extracted watermark identifier, and wherein said central server generates a validation key including at least one of a random and pseudo-random number, and encodes the validation key, and wherein said central server appends the validation key to the corresponding pointer, and communicates the pointer and validation key to the user terminal.

25. (original): The system according to claim 24, wherein the pointer comprises at least one of a URL, IP address and web address.

26. (currently amended): The system according to claim 25, wherein the validation key further comprises a date-time value.

27. (original): The system according to claim 24, wherein said central server encodes by at least one of hashing, encrypting, and rotating.

28. (original): The system according to claim 27, wherein the central server encodes by converting the validation key to alpha-characters, and adjusting the characters according to a code key.

29. (original): The system according to claim 28, wherein the central server encodes the code key with the validation key.

30. canceled.

31. (currently amended): A method of operating a computer server, the computer server to communicate with at least one user terminal, said method comprising: ~~the steps of:~~
receiving ~~an document~~ identifier from the user terminal;
identifying a pointer associated with the ~~document~~ identifier;
determining whether the pointer is a predetermined class, and
if not the predetermined class, communicating the pointer to the user terminal; and
if the predetermined class, generating a validation key, and
communicating the pointer and validation key to the user terminal.

32. (original): The method according to claim 31, wherein the pointer comprises at least one of a URL, IP address and web address.

33. (original): The method according to claim 32, wherein the predetermined class comprises at least one of a restricted access website, exclusive access website, an entry-through-purchased documents website, a restricted URL, and an exclusive URL.

34. (original): The method according to claim 33, wherein the validation key comprises at least one of a time stamp, a predetermined number, and a pseudo-random number.

35. (original): The method according to claim 34, wherein said document identifier comprises an identifier extracted from a digitally watermarked document.

36. (original): The method according to claim 35, further comprising ~~the step of~~ encoding the validation key.

37. (original): The method according to claim 34, wherein said document identifier comprises an identifier extracted from a digitally watermarked document.

38. (currently amended): A computer server, said computer server to communicate with at least one user terminal, said computer server comprising:

means for receiving an document identifier from the user terminal;

means for identifying a pointer associated with the ~~document~~ identifier;

means for determining whether the pointer is a predetermined class, and

if not the predetermined class, means for communicating the pointer to the user terminal; and

if the predetermined class, means for generating a validation key, and communicating the pointer and validation key to the user terminal.